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Cong Confidence Shaken, CIA Memo Discloses

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WASHINGTON — Sen. Edmund S. Muskie Tuesday night quoted a Central Intelligence Agency memorandum indicating that Viet Cong confidence and morale have been badly shaken in recent months.

Muskie interpreted the optimistic CIA report as evidence that the Johnson administration's policy of "unremitting pressure" and a "carefully measured response" to the enemy's aggression is "getting results."

The senator said he had asked the CIA for its assessment of our position in Viet Nam.

THE REMARKS by Muskie were contained in a speech to the Federation of Jewish Agencies in Philadelphia. His office released the text here and underscored the references to the CIA memo which, presumably, was released with the knowledge, if not the approval, of high administration officials.

Muskie quoted the CIA report, as follows:

"There is no room for excessive optimism," however, "the military situation has stabilized, the competence and performance of the GVN (Government of Viet Nam) has been improved, the attitude of the South Vietnamese people has shifted, and it is our adversaries who are beginning to have serious doubts about the wisdom or probable success of their present courses of action."

"Communist prisoners, de-

fectors and captured documents all indicate that the events of the past year have had a material adverse effect on Viet Cong morale and shaken confidence in ultimate victory throughout their ranks.

MUSKIE REPORTED this assessment by the CIA:

The enemy lost 35,400 men killed in 1965, 25,000 in the past six months alone. This compares with 11,250 South Vietnamese and 1,365 U.S. in the same period. The senator said the Communists are facing a "growing desertion problem" among their troops and among the local citizens on whom they rely for various kinds of support.

Muskie said he believes the administration's course in Viet Nam "makes sense." He argued that the enemy is "paying a price in both resources and manpower for his continuing aggression."